

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03
SCA-01 CIAE-00 INSE-00 DODE-00 SY-05 DEAE-00
AID-05 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06
INR-07 NSAE-00 /088 W
-----070531Z 095714 /17

R 060744Z APR 77
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4411
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SREF, VS, HK
SUBJECT: HONG KONG FLIGHTS FROM SAIGON DURING MARCH

1. CATHAY PACIFIC FLEW TWO EVACUATION FLIGHTS FROM SAIGON TO HONG KONG DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH. THE FLIGHTS, WHICH OCCURRED ON MARCH 9 AND MARCH 30, BOTH CARRIED 162 PASSENGERS, ALL ETHNIC CHINESE. THE MAJORITY OF PERSONS ON THESE FLIGHTS WERE ELDERLY COUPLES. SINCE DECEMBER 21 THERE HAVE BEEN FIVE FLIGHTS BRINGING A TOTAL OF 782 PASSENGERS FROM SAIGON TO HONG KONG. THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 1700 PERSONS WITH HONG KONG ENTRY VISAS STILL IN SAIGON, AND HONG KONG IMMIGRATION IS CONSIDERING ANOTHER 3000 ENTRY VISA APPLICATIONS WHICH, ACCORDING TO A HONG KONG IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL, FOR THE MOST PART WILL BE REJECTED. ONE FLIGHT IS EXPECTED IN LATE APRIL IF THE VIETNAMESE ISSUE SUFFICIENT EXIT VISAS TO ENABLE THE FLIGHT TO BE FILLED. NO FLIGHTS ARE PLANNED FOR MAY AS THERE

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ARE NO CATHAY PACIFIC AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE.

2. SEVERAL PASSENGERS ABOARD THESE LAST TWO FLIGHTS INDICATED THAT NO BRIBES WERE REQUIRED TO EFFECT DEPARTURE. (COMMENT: A LOCAL PRESS REPORT CLAIMS THERE WERE STILL CASES OF "CORRUPTION" IN CONNECTION WITH THESE FLIGHTS, BUT A CLOSE EXAMINATION

OF THE REPORT SHOWS THAT THE PERSONS LEAVING WERE
REQUIRED TO SIGN OVER THEIR PROPERTY TO THE STATE
WHICH CAN ONLY BE CLASSIFIED AS STATE-RUN - AND
THEREFORE LEGAL/EXTORTION AND NOT CORRUPT BRIBERY.
END COMMENT)

3. INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM PERSONS LEAVING SAIGON
INDICATES THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE IMPROVING AND
STREAMLINING THEIR DEPARTURE PROCEDURES. SOME PERSONS
REACHING HERE WERE PROCESSED THROUGH THE DECENTRALIZED
PRECINCT OFFICES RATHER THAN THROUGH IMMIGRATION
HEADQUARTERS. EXIT VISAS THEMSELVES ARE NOW PRINTED
ON A SMALL FOLDING CARD RATHER THAN ON CHEAP WHITE
PAPER. AFTER RECEIVING AN EXIT VISA PERSONS MUST
RECEIVE A TAX CLEARANCE, PROPERTY CLEARANCE (GIVING
ALL PROPERTY TO THE STATE OR, AS THE SRV PUTS IT,
"RETURNING IT BACK TO THE PEOPLE.") AND A BANK
CLEARANCE (CERTIFYING THAT ALL OUTSTANDING LOANS
ARE PAID). WHILE IN THE PAST A DEPARTING PERSON
WAS REQUIRED TO GO TO ALL OF SAIGON'S TWENTY ODD
BANKS, NOW ONE OFFICE ISSUES THE CLEARANCE.
TRAVELERS MAY TAKE OUT ONLY \$5 AND A VERY SMALL
AMOUNT OF GOLD SUCH AS A WEDDING RING. EXPENSIVE
CAMERAS AND RADIOS, HOWEVER, MAY BE TAKEN OUT.

4. HONG KONG OFFICIAL MENTIONED THAT THEY ARE NO
LONGER PRESSED VERY MUCH WITH THE QUESTION OF TAKING
TAIWANESE FROM SAIGON SINCE THE ICRC APPEARS TO HAVE
MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SENDING OUT TAIWAN PASSPORT
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HOLDERS TO TAIWAN VIA BANGKOK. CROSS

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NNN

Message Attributes

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